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and

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Name: Gompo Gyalha [Tib. mgon po rgyal lha]
Gender: Male
Age: 60
Date of Birth: 1924

Abstract

Gompo Gyalha was a Khamba trader in Chamdo. In this interview, Gompo Gyalha discusses how Lhalu treated the Khambas fairly when he first came to Chamdo as Dochi or Governor General, but how the Khambas were afraid of him. He discusses how Lhalu recruited militia forces, and how during the Chinese invasion Karchung Depön fled, and how Derge Sey surrendered with his regiment. He also discusses how although Ngabö burned the Chamdo armory, most of the guns were not destroyed and were looted by the Chamdo Monastery's monks and the local Chamdo people. He also discusses how the Tibetan commanders (depön) and soldiers treated the Khambas poorly. And he talks about Geda Lama who was said to have been poisoned in Chamdo.

Tape 1

Q: When did you get to Chamdo?

A: I came to Chamdo during the period of Yuthok. After that I came to Lhasa once, but mostly I was in Chamdo. I also went to India sometimes.

Q: How did Lhalu do when he came and what happened?

A: Lhalu came and did quite well. I don't need to mention about bullying [Tib. dbang yod] people, right?

Q: Yes, all of them bullied people. The regiment would bully the local people a lot.

A: When Lhalu came down, he was kind of illustrious [Tib. gzi brjid chen po] because he is the one who destroyed Reting and who was the destroyer of Sera monastery.

Q: Because of this didn't the people dislike him?

A: People disliked him and talked behind his back, but they were very scared to talk in front of him. When he first came he made the people perform the Tibetan opera. Some people said that he is the person who issued an order in Lhasa to eliminate all people with a bald head [monks]; in other words, all the monks should be killed. He is the person who issued that order. In this way, the people didn't dare to watch the opera.

During these opera shows all the soldiers went around and removed the knives and everything harmful from the the people attending the show because they were scared that Lhalu iwould be attacked. At this time, some people were also beaten. So the people were even scared to go and see the opera because of the wrathful activities this Doji Lhalu did in Chamdo.

Q: It was because Sera Jey is part of [affiliated with] Chamdo. At that time, Geshe Champa Thaye [Tib. byams pa mtha' yas] was there too, right?

A: . Yes. Geshe Champa Thaye was considered by Lhalu to be a lama. [laughter]

Q: How did that happen?

A: Lhulu considers Phabongkha as his root guru.

Q: That is true. Everyone agreed about that.

A: Yes. He [Lhalu] did whatever he told him to do. In his first year, Lhalu's judgement was quite fair and people respected him. He did very well the first year. After that, however, he started to issue a lot of lamyig [Tib. lam yig] or corvée travel permits, in which for example, corvée horses were given to businessmen. et cetera, et cetera, which caused a lot of hardship for the people.

Q: Did he even give the lamyig permits to the businessmen?

A: Yes, yes he gave the lamyig to businessmen.

Q: When they gave the lamyig to the businessmen, did they give him money or what?

A: The question of money did not arise, but when they went to see him to request a lamyig they brought a gift with the request [Tib. mjal zhu] such as maybe one or two boxes of tea leaves. Otherwise, they didn't pay money separately. This permit letter will cost nothing for him; it was given to Lhalu's friends and friends of friends, et cetera. But those who didn't know him, didn't get it.

Q: How did Lhalu raise the local militia units?

A: He raised one militia unit from Markham [Tib. smar khams], Traya [Tib. brag g.yab] and Gonjo [Tib. go 'jo]. The second he raised from the Rekha Sosum [Tib. re kha sog gsum] - it is just called Rekha Sosum, but it is only one dzong and it is from the side of Rongpo. Rekha Sosum means: 1. Rongpo Monastery, 2. Tsenden [Tib. tsan dan] Monastery and 3. Jungpo Chönkhor [Tib. gcung pa chos 'khor] Monastery. These three monasteries were under one district. They are named monasteries but they have monks as well as lay people. That was called Rekha Sosum. Thirdly, he raised militia from Shotar Losum [Tib. sho star lho gsum] which included Shopando [Tib. sho pa mdo], Pembar [Tib. dpal 'bar] and Lhodzong [Tib. lho rdzong]

Q: How many soldiers did he collected from Rekha Sosum.

A: Initially, he collected fifty soldiers, but twenty returned so only thirty were left.

Q: Why so few people?

A: I don't know, it was like that. At first we had to bring our own weapons, but later they gave 303 English Carbines. They were sent to the other side of the Yangtse River.

Q: How many soldiers did they recruit from Markham, Traya and Gonjo?

A: I do not know exactly, but Traya is the biggest among them and Traya had about 100. I don't know how much Markham had but Tenpa Trinley [Tib. bstan pa 'phrin las] will be able to tell you. Then the first Chinese came and they had a fight at the Kamthog Trukha [Tib. skam thog dru kha] ferry site.

Q: Had they recruited the militia before that?

A: They had already prepared the militia.

Q: Where were these militia units sent?

A: Some of them went straight to Chamdo and they got arms, and some went to Yuchukha [Tib. g.yu chu kha] and went to the border, the Yangtse River, and some were on the Derge side.

Q: Did they ever keep any local militia unit in Chamdo?

A: None were kept in Chamdo. Every militia unit was sent to the border; none was kept in Chamdo. To tell you the truth, those people who collected the local militia, collected the worst men available because the better men were not willing to fight. The better families didn't send their sons, So they collected the worse men possible and as soon as the Chinese came they didn't fight much and started running.

Q: Before the militia units, the regiments was there, right.

A: The regiment also ran away. For example, Karchung [Tib. dkar byung] Depön was posted in Derge Jomda [Tib. sde dge 'jo mda']. To tell you the truth, the Chinese came and surrounded Karchung Depön so he had no way to move. It was the people of Derge that gave guides to those new coming conquerors.

Q: You mean the Derge people on the other side of the Yangtse, right?

A: Yes. It was the Derge people who handed over Karchung Depön to the Chinese.

Q: How did they do that?

A: Those conquerors don't know anything about that area, but the people there helped them to go through. The Chinese troops had come much before Karchung Depön had his post. They had come before he was posted and that is why it was very difficult for him to escape. Karchung Depön fought a little bit then left Jomda and came over to Kyoshung [Tib. skyo gzhung]. While he was staying in Kyoshung, about a three days journey, he was attacked. He was put in the Chinese hands by the local people, however he managed to escape. Although he managed to escape, his horse was captured by the Chinese. They brought his horse along

with the double tassel to Chamdo where the Chinese armies first reached in 1950.

At that time, Karchung Depön's horse was fully decorated with double tassels, but the Chinese put some wood on this horse when the Commander, Wang [Ch. siling] first arrived in Chamdo. Though the Chinese army which was coming through Riwoche was supposed to reach Chamdo first, Wang Siling who had come from the Derge side reached there first because they had no stops. Those who were coming from Riwoche, had to deal with a little counterattack by Commander (Depön) Muja [Tib. mu bya].

Q: Did Muja fight well?

A: He did fight a little bit, but not very much. The better battle was fought by Rupön Bügang [Tib. sbud khang] in the seventh month. At that time the Chinese were not ready to attack, so they were not fully prepared, but they had to counter him so he had been able to put better resistance in that seventh month.

Q: When the Chinese actually came, the Tibetan resistance did not fight very well, right?

A: Especially Derge Sey who was posted in the Markham area. He surrendered immediately. I do not know if you have seen the documentary film, Rimpoche, that the Chinese have prepared, but that shows that they put khata scarves on the barrels of their guns and faced towards the Chinese, who surrounded the whole unit commanded by Derge Sey. I saw this documentary in Chamdo in the early fifties. The regiment led by Phüntso Wangyal came by Ba into Traya, and from Traya into Markham and then to Chamdo.

Q: Why did he surrender right away?

A: I do not know why. He didn't have a counterattack from anywhere. - Derge Sey immediately surrendered because he didn't have time to fight [Tib. 'dzing long yod ma red]. Also people coming from Jyekundo were late coming so Wang Siling [was able to come first in Chamdo.

I heard that the Wang Siling's position was much higher and Wang Siling was even able to advance into Lhasa first and the Dalai Lama presented him a good horse which he brought back to Chamdo. The horse was so good that he even killed one Chinese by jumping, so the Chinese were very scared of using that horse and I bought it myself. It paid 800 Chinese yuan in silver coins. It was not a young horse it was an old horse. Afterwards I was able to sell it at a good profit and so I sold it.

Q: What happened to these local militia units?

A: They ran fast, they ran faster.

Q: I heard that the moment they gave three dayang, they started running. What was that about?

A: Whenever they surrendered their guns, they [the Chinese] started to give dayan coins whether it was the local militia or the regimental soldiers. When they came with guns, first they gave each three dayan; later they gave five dayan each and later they also gave ten dayan.

Q: At that time, the local people didn't transport things for the Chinese, right?

A: Yes [they did]. They transported it directly from Derge.

Q: Who transported it from Derge?

A: The people in Derge, Kyoshung and Chamdo transported the Chinese foodstuffs and they were paid a high transportation fee.

Q: How much did they pay?

A: The Chinese started paying 5 dayang for a yak at each transportation station [Tib. sa tshug]. People were shocked by this generosity of the Chinese because the Tibetan Government didn't pay anything and the Chinese kept on raising it, from the 5 it went up to even 15, and later 20 per yak.

Q: When Lhalu raised the local militia unit what was the attitude of the people in Chamdo at that time.

A: When he first raised the militia army people were quite happy about it, and they were saying that when the Chinese will come we will fight; we will have to fight to the end. Not only that, the local leaders said: "Oh, just now they have raised a small army, but later on we might have to fight with every single male person." This was the talk but when later the Chinese actually came, everybody kept very mum and quiet, because they started giving them things, and as I said, they kept quiet.

Q: What about Ngabö? What was the reaction of the people towards him?

A: He had no time to bully [Tib. btsan dbang] the people. He had no chance to do anything, except that he put the armory on fire which was a great help. When Ngabö put the armory on fire because he ran away, not the whole armory was burned so the monks of the Chamdo monastery and the local people had a great chance to carry out weapons from the armory and they took out a fantastic amount of arms and ammunitions which the Chamdo people sold to the people from Traya, Gonjo and even Litang. These were used later to fight against the Chinese. That is why I say he had been very good to put the armory on fire. That day Ngabö left, the Chinese were unable to reach Chamdo. Also, although he put the armory on fire, it was not completely burned. So almost half of the arms and ammunitions were not burned. When they first heard the noise of the armory burning, the people of Chamdo and particularly the monks of Chamdo monastery, ran down and collected all these arms and ammunitions whatever they could take, and took it to their own homes. Especially the monastery removed a large number of arms from the armory and kept it

below the monastery.

Q: Was it only the armory, what about the property that belonged to the Doji and all other areas. Who took away those things?

A: Property also had been looted and were taken by the local people, and mostly by the monks of the monastery. They looted everything. Mainly the monasteries took it and mostly the properties were taken by the monks. Some even got a full trunk of hundred sang notes. The day Ngabö was leaving, I was not aware that he was leaving, so I went to Traya. The next day I came back and everybody had a gun that they had taken from the armory. I was very sorry that I could not get any arms. I didn't care much for the properties but I was very sorry I missed the guns, although I was able to buy some things very, very cheaply, so I bought two or three guns. Because that night I went to Traya, the next morning, before Ngabö left, even before sunrise, even that very night, they looted the armory and all.

Q: How did people came to know that Ngabö had left?

A: I think that the Chamdo leaders called Sheltag [Tib. ?] and the officials of Phagpala [Tib. 'phags pa lha] Labrang came to know about it. It was only known to the Chamdo monastery and the officials around and also that very particular village. They were the only ones who got all the properties and guns. It was only the village called Matang (town). As I said earlier, we were able to buy all those things [from them] so that was very useful for us. The people in Chamdo, Traya, Litang and Gonjo were able to buy so many 303 English Carbines [which we used] when we fought against the Chinese.

Q: What do you think? Even before the Chinese came, the Tibetan government had given a lot of hardship to the people. What do you think about that? They have given a lot of hardship?

A: It was mainly the army regiments and the kudrak who caused tremendous hardship for the local Khamba people. Mostly it was the sawangchemmo and depön of those regiments; they were really bad. For example, I can say here openly, that most of the regimental armies were looters, they looted [exploited] the local people. They looted people to their face. In the presence of your own eyes they would loot you and if you complained that they looted you, they would say: "How dare you to complain against the 'god-soldiers' of the Dewashung. Whoever complains will be lashed with 100 whips." So people didn't dare to complain about the extractions. It was the regiments who made the miser to become beggars. If I talk about these things, it pains my heart.

Q: Can you say that the government officers treated people very badly but the Chinese did not even hit you by flicking with their fingers?

A: When the Chinese first came they did their best to please the people and said that they were servants helping them. for example, they fetched water for the people in some families. They went to the fields and collected the crops and did all sort of funny little things. The soldiers who came went to various houses to bring water or who went to the fields to bring the crops, were very hungry, but there was no food and they slaughtered many mules, but they were not allowed to eat [from the miser], so they didn't eat at all. Later they started eating the food, but they left some money, like 2-3 dayan for the food they ate. So people thought they were really good.

Q: At that time, the Chinese were saying that the old society is not good and that it had placed a stone cap [Tib. rdo zhwa] on you, so you have to take it off, right?

A: Yes. They said you have to take off the stone cap and then you will become free [Hin. khu shi] after the liberation.

Q: Didn't the Chinese also say that they came to help the people. And as far as the old government is concerned, you call it a religious government or state, but it is this government which exiled the Panchen Rinpoche to China and it is this very government that killed Reting Rinpoche?

A: Yes, they said, "You have destroyed Sera and killed Reting, but we treat you nicely and will bring back the Panchen Lama from China and we will make the sects of the Buddhism as before and you will not need to pay any taxes like you used to pay to the old government, forexample, carrying/transporting mules, horses, et cetera. However, in case you carry on business, then you will have to pay a little bit more tax. At about this time, I remember that Traya Kyamgön [Tib. skyabs mgon] Rimpoche also gave a very good talk in Chamdo, though he was very, very young and there was a competition between Traya Kyamgön and Chamdo Phagpala. Phagpala was a little older than Traya Kyamgön, but Traya Kyamgön gave a big public statement saying, "I am just now a kid, so I don't know much, but you should not destroy Buddhism, that is very important." People were taken by surprise with this statement from a young reincarnate Lama like Traya Rinpoche, and this became a very well known statement. This was the meeting held after Ngabö signed the 17-Point Agreement.

Q: [Interviewer Note: Just before the interview with this gentleman, I had visitors who urged me to have an interview with Gyalha. They were both from the Traya locality and they also mentioned to me about Traya Kyamgön who as a young lama voluntarily got up and spoke about this. They added one more thing. They said that in Traya, Kyamgön's statement is also supposed to have said, "Geta Trülku [Tib. dge stag] is either killed or died a natural death, but he is no longer and he is definitely one of those of a higher soul so people should pray for him and pray for the fulfillment of his wishes." This is what these other people told me.]

Q: Please tell me in detail how the Chinese started with their propaganda. I mean, what did they say when they came. Everybody says that China used nice and sweet talk, but that doesn't mean anything to me, so please tell me what did they say specifically?

A: They said, "We are going to take over Lhasa. Because we have taken over Chamdo already, there is no problem to take over Lhasa, so we are going to take over Lhasa. After taking over Lhasa, we are going to treat you well. The PLA is the people's servant and we are going to serve the people. We are going to develop you and make you equal. In the past the rich bullied the poor, but we will not let that happen.

Q: When they said we are going to make everything equal, what did they mean by equal. Did they mean that the Chinese are

going to have you to take the wealth from the rich families and have it distributed to the poor and that they are going to give wealth to the poor and make things equal?

A: No, they didn't say that, but they said that they are going to help and give the power to the poor and make the equal rights. But they never said that they would take it from the rich and give it to the poor.

Q: They said that the previous Tibet is not good, right?

A: Yes, they said that the kudrak bullied the people and the lamas and the jiso managers of the monasteries and tratsang (colleges) have exploited you.

Q: Did they say that you have to oppose them?

A: They didn't say that. They said that you have make things equal. Moreover they said they were going to give the same power to the poor people as the wealthy people have and make it equal and there will be no boss and the servant [Tib. dpon g.yog].

Q: Did the people believe that this would happen, this propaganda?

A: Only a few businessmen who had been to China knew that they were causing a lot of hardship in China, so they didn't believe it. But the ordinary people more or less believed what the Chinese said. There is a saying: "The PLA are the grateful parents [Tib. drin can pha ma].

Q: Didn't they also say, "The silver dayan is the king of money. The Chinese who we are grateful to the lord of lords." [Tib. rda yang can dngul gyi rgyal po yin/rgya drin can dpon gyi dpon po yin]?

A: Yes, this was normal talk with the Khambas. Moreover I was in Chamdo, and in Chamdo there were a lot of mixed race old Chinese left there. They really welcomed them and they were very happy with the Chinese. ...Most of the Chamdo people were Chinese. They were a mixed race, there was a lot of mixing.

Q: Is it true that when Ngabö was running away, it was very difficult for him to get the horse corvée tax from the local people?

A: Until Ngabö ran away from Chamdo they had been providing the horse corvée tax; they were forcefully taking that. Even when you have an extra horse, they would also just take it. When Ngabö was running away, nobody send the horse corvée at all to him, that is true. Even the Chinese who reached Chamdo were given the horse corvée. But after that not anymore.

Q: I mean before Ngabö left.

A: Before that, people had to wait [be prepared] to send the horse corvée from one station to the next. Even after reaching Chamdo, the Markham Theiji, I think he was Derge Sey, had come up to Traya using horse corvée. From Traya, the people brought him up to Chamdo. At first the Markham people had decided to rob him, but Phurba Pön [Tib. phur pa dpon] did not allow them to rob him. Phurba Pön himself with 30 of his young toughs together went to see that he reached safely in Traya and delivered him to Chamdo. The Markham Theiji had caused a lot of hardship to the Markham people, so the Markham people decided to rob him and he had a big fight with Phurba Pön before. However when the Chinese came, they could see to it that people didn't take advantage of the situation.

Q: Many of these Khamba leaders went to the side of the Chinese and many of them went to the side of Tibet. We know for a fact that those who were went towards the Chinese were Jagötsang and Geta Lama, right?

A: Panda Topgye [Tib. spom mda' stob rgyal].

Q: Regarding Panda, we have heard that Panda discussed the matter with Dewashung and seeing that Dewashung was fighting with the Chinese, Panda said he will also help them to fight, guerilla style, from behind the Chinese providing that Dewashung guaranteed autonomy for the Kham area. Have you ever heard this?

A: No, I have never heard that. Before Lhalu left, I saw that Panda Topgye came [to Chamdo] with 8 or 9 servants. We heard that Topgye suggested to negotiate with China.

Q: Are you sure it was Topgye. I thought it was Panda] Raga [Tib. rab dga']?

A: No, I think it was Topgye, but anyway, they stayed a couple of days and nothing happened and probably they could not agree to something and Topgye left.

Q: Before that the Geta Lama also came to Chamdo to discuss the matter of Tibet. Is Geta Lama from Ba or from Triu [Tib. tre hor].

A: He is Triu, from Geta Monastery. He is called Geta Lama but his monastery is Beri Monastery.

Q: How did Geta Lama come to Chamdo?

A: Geta Lama reached Chamdo and he stayed with Buka [Tib. bu dga'], a rich businessman from Dargye Gomba Monastery and he died there. He had said that he would like to go to Lhasa. He had said, "Please sent me to Lhasa as he would like to meet the Dalai Lama and had something to talk about with him. Probably, the Chinese sent him to talk. Then it was said that some Englishman gave him poison, but I don't know whether it is true or not, but he did die.

Q: Who gave him the poison?

A: The government of Tibet, Dewashung. They invited him to a party and then he died. There was an Englishman who sent telegrams and he is supposed to have given the poison. The Chinese said later that the suspicion of this was there even before the Chinese came in. The Khambas said that.

Q: Who gave it actually?

A: I really don't know, but it was supposed that poison was given and they said the Englishman gave it. I think it was Lhalu who had given it, but he made this Englishman do it.

Q: There were two Englishmen.

A: Are you sure there were two, maybe one of them was Indian. Anyway there were two, maybe one of them or maybe one of them was Indian; but there were two. This is the way in which the Khambas talk and Buga was a very close friend of mine he even doubted it very much. He thought that the Englishman has done it. He said that this Lama had a lot of pain and after that he died -- he had passed a black stool and his body turned black. I heard that Buga is still living here, he is now 76, I heard he is still living in Tibet.

Q: Did Buga also think that he was poisoned?

A: Yes, Buga was a very religious person and this Geta Trülku was one of his root gurus.

Q: I don't think that the Englishman gave it. It was probably Lhalu or Chamdo monastery?

A: At that time, there were no Chinese. Why would Chamdo monastery give it. I don't think that Chamdo monastery gave it. But I have a question for you. Do you think that had Geta gone to Lhasa, would that have been of any use for Tibet's future? Would any useful purpose been served in that? Some people used to say that he was a Chinese agent; some said he was not, but I don't know. But do you think that it would have been useful if he had gone to Tibet. Those who took teachings from him will never believe that he was a Chinese agent.

Q: He was not only a big lama by name, but he also gave all those teachings

A: Yes, yes, he was very well respected and he was giving all these teachings also. Buga, et cetera, had been taking teachings from him, that is why he became his root guru. I don't know what other people thought but Buga definitely thought that the Englishman gave him the poison, of course under someone's instructions. This was the talk even long before the Chinese reached Chamdo. When the Chinese came, of course, they picked it up, but actually the talk was there long before that.

Q: Karchung [Tib. dkar byung] Depön was supposed to have run away very much, right?

A: He was just able to escape, he ran away wearing woman's clothes.

Q: How did he get woman's clothes?

A: He must have been sleeping with a woman and he got up and couldn't find his own clothes so he put a woman's chuba on and ran.

Q: Which woman?

A: It was a woman who was a prostitute. Her name was Derge Trayang [Tib. bkra g.yang. She died in Kalimpong.

Q: Ngabö didn't get any time to do anything.

A: Yes.

Q: I also heard that the local militia units that Lhalu had collected were sent back by Ngabö to their own respective areas, is that true?

A: No, no, no that is a total lie. That is not true. Ngabö didn't return them at all. They were at the border When they were losing the border areas and when the Chinese were marching in and were crossing the [Yangtse] river, all the government or Dewashung soldiers did not stay, but ran away and similarly the local militia also ran away.

Q: When they ran away, they didn't go back to Chamdo, but went straight away to their own homes.

A: Yes, except for a few of them who had to go back to Traya from the Dzachu [Tib. rdza qu] side, some of them came to Chamdo, otherwise most of them went straight to their homes. The few of them who came to Chamdo, it is on the way to their homes.

Q: Please tell me about the militia units, and where they put what?

A: Some were put in Matra Gosum [Tib. smar brag go gsum], in Markham, in Traya and in Gonjo in the Yuchukha area. At the Jyekundo side of the border they put ShotarLhosum and Reka Sasum. It was somewhere in the Nangchen Jola side.

Q: Please tell me who had come with the Chinese to Chamdo. I mean, which well known Khamba leaders had come with the Chinese.

A: With Wang Siling there was nobody other than Phüntso Wangye. One year later, the [ex-] Sera Abbot came. [Note: This was the Sera abbot who ran away from Lhasa a few years before that]. He had no power, I was a quite a good friend of his and I talked

with him. He had no power. He stayed in Chamdo one day, and I went to see him. He gave me one full brick of tea and I also gave him an equal amount of gifts and I took all his meals to him. The Sera Abbot was sick. I also got into trouble once.

Q: What did you do?

A: One of his relations, by name of Kalo, [people] they went to Dewashung and Sera Jey, especially, Muge Gyagpa, [Tib. mu ge rgyags pa] tried to hand him over to the Dewashung. Dewashung tried to get him and he ran away, trying to run towards China. However he couldn't run, so he went to Bhutan and settled in Bhutan. I am quite a close friend to his. Later the matter was settled and he was able to return from Bhutan to Tibet. That was long before '59.

Q: This chandzö was killed, right?

A: He was killed at the Jyekundo side, at that pass. He died in Nangchen Jola. He was not killed by the soldiers of the Dewashung, but they paid money to the people who hunt mammoths and they shot him. One of them killed him and for that he was paid money by the government.

All the other parties had left and had gone to Sichuan in China, and Xining in China and then the Chinese handed them back over to Yuthok, supposedly Yuthok gave a lot of money for them. When the abbot was running, they were with a group and Dewashung was chasing them. Then one day they couldn't go, so this brothers told the abbot, "Now you try your best to go and escape. We will keep on fighting so you see if you can get through." The abbot went into one of those little villages and went into the house of one Triu Khamba whose name is Legag, the abbot went into his house and stayed there, and then gradually escaped. But the others kept on fighting and now there were only two brothers left. They came all the way back instead of going down to try to cross up to the Jyekundo side. Finally they got up to the Jyekundo side, but then the Chinese handed them over to Yuthok. They went up to the Chinese side, up to Nangchen Shomda, and from there they went up the Xining and then they were handed back to the Yuthok.

The abbot carried some wood and went to Chamdo and he saw Yuthok walking round. Near the Dzasam bridge, the soldiers there were playing dice, and they didn't notice anything, so he went carrying wood. He left the wood with one of the families and said, Please keep it for a while, and that he would go up and then come back and collect it. Then they crossed the Yuchukha and didn't return. This is how he escaped. Finally he didn't go to his hometown, but he went straight to China and went to Mt. Wu Taishan [Tib. ri bo rtse nga]. There he started to do his prayers and to meditate. When the Communist Chinese took over China, they made inquiries. They told him, "You have to go back to Tibet, we will give you the rank, but you have to go back and take your revenge."

Q: What did abbot tell you?

A: He told me, "Now, I have to go to Lhasa and I have to see those kudrak and I have to go very proudly." He was laughing and he said, "I might be able to bully the kudraks and say something bad about them. I may have no power, but I might be able to bully the kudraks and say something bad about them, and he laughed. I also told him that he should say something and especially when you meet Muge Gyagpa, you should say something."

Q: Was he able to say anything to Muge Gyagpa.

A: I don't know. He returned, but I couldn't meet him.

Q: What did the Khambas say about the Englishman? Did they say that he was a British spy?

A: Some said that he might be a British spy and some said he might be working for the Tibetan Government and was paid a high salary. At that time, we could also use the wireless to talk to Lhasa if he paid 5 sang.

Q: The Chinese friends among the Khambas, Jagötsang, no doubt was one. And Geta Lama, maybe due to his compassion, lets say because he was a lama, he had given food to the Chinese, and that's why they did that to him, right?

A: I heard that Zhu De left him [Geta Lama] a letter saying that this will be useful in the future. Wangchuk Tenpa [Tib. dbang phyug bstan pa] of Gyaltang [Tib. rgyal thang] was one of the well-known Gyaltang leaders and was a very powerful one. When the Chinese first came he thought they were enemies and he attacked them, but later he became a very powerful leader of China and he was paid 2-3 loads of dayan. He was a very high-salaried leader of China, and when everybody fought with the Chinese, he wouldn't fight. Finally he died in a struggle session [Tib. 'thab 'dzing].

Q: This was during the Cultural Revolution.

A: Yes. The magji (Commander) of the Rabten Monastery was Tsültrim [Tib. tshul khriims]. He killed 68 Chinese and made the Chinese have a hard time. After that, the Chinese took him to China and the Lhasa people were saying that he was the hero. Finally, he died in prison from starvation.

Q: Who are the Khambas who cooperated with the Tibetans?

A: Nothing that I can really say. There were no outstanding leaders, but those west of the Yangtse River thought that the Dewashung will be powerful so they tried to keep good relations.

Q: Who were the Pön this side of the Yangste?

A: In Markham, it was Phurpa Pön and in Traya is was the Traya Labrang and the Traya Jiso. Also Phagpalha in Chamdo.

Q: Wasn't Phagpalha pro-Chinese?

A: Not in the beginning, to be true, not in the beginning. But later when the Chinese had already established themselves, then he became Chinese.

Q: How can you say this, because Phagpalha Labrang was the first who didn't send the horse corvée to the Doji (Governor-General) and looted their property etc.

A: The Doji's property was looted. About the horse corvée business, I don't know, but the property was definitely looted. The looting was mostly done by the Chamdo monastery monks. First was the armory, but then they took the property also. It is said that some people found a box of 100 sang notes. Among the Derge (people) Ralutsang has been quite good. He was the first one to attack the Chinese even later when China already had established itself in Kham.

Q: Later all of the chiefs fought, right? But the pön (chiefs) on the other side brought the Chinese, right?

A: Not really brought them, but they sent the horse corvée for the Chinese.

Q: One of those was Jagötsang, right?

A: Yes. And there were pön from Ganzi Dargye Gomba. Both have been pro-Chinese. But Dargye Gomba at first was not pro-Chinese, but later when these communist Chinese came, they handed over all the Dewashung arms and ammunition, whatever they had; everything for the communist Chinese.

Q: In the past, Dargye Gomba helped the Dewashung, right?

A: Yes, they enjoyed a tremendous amount of benefit, that was given to them by the XIIIth Dalai Lama. For instance, even for business they don't have to pay the trade taxes [Tib. ja sgo la khral] forever. Not only that, the caterpillar fungus [Tib. dbyar rtsa dgun 'bu] and bulb of fritillary [Tib. rdza yung] produced in the Rekha Sosum area were not allowed to be sold to anybody except to Dargye Gomba. This was given to them by the XIIIth Dalai Lama. All of these went to China and probably to Russia and it was very expensive. Later, when the Chinese came, one load of this was equal to 1,000 Chinese silver coins. Even before, we used to take them to Dartsedo and they used to give 20-30 loads of tea leaves. So except for Dargye Gomba, we could not sell it and Dargye Gomba would come and pay whatever they liked to pay. This was the condition. The XIIIth Dalai Lama had been so good to Dargye Gomba, but when these communists came, Dargye Gomba let Dewashung down and they didn't fight the Chinese.

Q: Even at that time, weren't they part of the Chinese territory [Tib. rgya sde]?

A: They were on the other [east] side of the Yangtse. You can go and come back from Ganzi in one day.

Q: What about the Traupön [Tib. gra'u dpön]?

A: Trautsang is also another person who had been with the Chinese before, but later they fought really strongly. Even Jagötsang Namgyal Dorje [Tib. nam rgyal rdo rje] fought very well, very well.

Q: When did they really start fighting against China?

A: In '55 they started.

Q: Till then they could not see the true color of the Chinese and they thought the Chinese are good, right?

A: Yes. The first fighting against China started in Litang, then it was Phurpa, and in all places there were kind of bandits who came out and robbed 5-6 Chinese going up and down. Gyalo Thondup had been working since then because since 1955 he tried to bring the son of Gyadotsang to America, etc. Gyadotsang, et cetera, 7 people were dropped in Litang and Athar and Lotse were dropped in Samye, but the Dewashung (Tibetan) government refused to cooperate with those two. Even when they went to see the Drönyerchemmo Phala, he told them, "Since the 17-Point Agreement has been signed, you cannot go and see the Dalai Lama as that would be very dangerous for the Dalai Lama's life. The matters will be heard by the Kashag, et cetera, and that will be not good. So it is not good, and you cannot go and see the Dalai Lama. You should go straight away to wherever you are going, and don't try to see the Dalai Lama. If you need money, tell me, I will give you." This was Phala. This was how the Dewashung did not cooperate with them. Then they had a talk with Andru. Andru was also a Litangpa. Then they started the Chushigandru. That must be their Karma. But the Tibetans think that he [Athar] is not good.

Q: We have a saying, "Whenever somebody did good to the Tibetans, they always think it is bad." This has been saying among the Tibetans from Songtsen Gambo [Tib. strong btsan sgam po] onwards.